

a grand letter
Seoul Korea, S. D. G. +
Nov 9. 1892.

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My Dear Dr. Ellinger
I wish that you and the Board could know from personal observation and from a prolonged stay on the field the exact condition of things in your Korea mission during the last two years - but as that cannot be and as you cannot have the advantage of a personal talk with each member of the mission - you are forced to draw your conclusions from the communications received from the missionaries and from views given by others from whom you may receive information. Hoping that I may add some light and give some assistance to you in understanding the situation here, I set myself once more to the work of writing you a full, frank, and I trust very plain letter which I feel sure will be received as my past letters have been, without being misunderstood. Of course it is your letter of Sept. 20th to Dr. Vinton which makes me feel it my duty to write this letter. I appreciate your personal letter which releases me from any

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share in the Criticism upon the station
members for having ^{all} left Seoul at the same time.
I think I wrote you my reasons for returning
to Seoul from Eui Ju by way of Newchun,
and Chefoo - viz. that I wished to arrange
for the transfer of goods, books &c. by way of New-
Chun instead of overland from Seoul in order to
save expense - and also that I might get
the advantage of a knowledge of the methods of
school work so successful in Chefoo and Fungchow
to help me in the management of our boys school.
The trip from Eui Ju to Seoul overland takes 18 days. I
spent but 22 days in returning as I did. It was
not a pleasure trip but a business trip - although
the change of climate & surroundings after 3 months of
work in the interior being ^{much} more ^{restful} and
a pleasure. I drew nothing this year from
the appropriation for health trips - and my 2 months
absence from Seoul cost me more than what I drew
from St. Vincent Fund. \$160.00 silver.

I write thus for I do not wish to rest under
the slightest suspicion of having run ^{away} from ^{my}
part of duty for mere pleasure. ^{altho your letter has not precisely} I certainly see
something incongruous in a missionary to Korea
travelling this & staying in China but I take it
that in a pioneer work as ours is and especially
as my Northern work is something out of the ordinary

are to be expected. I am not at all sur-
 prised that you did not know what I think
 of the action of the station ^{members} which seemed to
 abandon the work for the summer. I was
 surprised when the news reached me in Singapore
 for it was not the intention when I left for
 the north in May that all should leave at
 the same time. I was not here and cannot write
 you concerning the situation there. You will hear from
 those who were here why it so occurred. I knew
 we would hear from you about it and felt it
 to be very unfortunate that it so occurred.

However I wish to assure you that some
 of the inferences which you drew from the
 fact that all were away were not warranted.
 Religious services were not abandoned. When
 I left I placed Mr. Saw on Evangelist in charge
 of the regular Sunday service of the church (which
 was under my charge two years) and the services were
 continued as usual - I was only being present and
 playing the organ as usual. The Sunday school
 was discontinued all the time that I was away
 and resumed upon my return. During the rainy
 season almost all work & travel is practically
 suspended so that the Koreans would not think
 that we had abandoned our work for an long time.
 Mr. Gale had just been transferred to Pusan

and the service which he had begun was
necessarily discontinued. I think you have
had the idea that a great deal more
work had been carried on in Seoul than
we have ever been able to do. Until this
year we have had no one (since Dr Anderson's
return) in the mission who could speak Korean
with any degree of fluency. Mr Gale was with
us just long enough to have a ^{regular} service barely
begun when he was transferred. In the
Shantung Mission in China new missionaries are

not allowed to have the responsibility of the
work of new stations, building new work until
they have had 5 years work on the language,
and the consequent experience. We have had
thrust upon us the full work of a station after
one or two years in the field before any of us
could be understood or understood Koreans except
in a limited degree.

I wish to give you a few facts upon ~~the~~
two questions in which you have criticised
us quite severely - viz - Extravagance and
the lack of spiritual results. I shall speak
freely & fully at the risk of criticizing &
reflecting upon others.

In some way you have gotten the impression

that the seal station has been extravagant
in real estate. If there has been any
such extravagance the responsibility for it
lies entirely with Dr. Allen, Mr. Underwood
and Dr. Heron and not with the present
members of the seal station. Not one of
whom was here when the real estate was
bought. During the time that the present mem-
bers of the station have been here and had
park in the Mission work but 2 pieces of real
estate have been bought - one of them a
small house in the corner of Mr. Gifford's compound
which was made into necessary coal & wood sheds.
This cost in silver \$70.57 or \$54.14 Gold.
The other was an old wine shop at the entrance
to the Compound occupied by Dr. Heron & Mr. Moffet;
which was removed that in its place might be
built a gate & wood shed & a wall separating the
stable from the road. This cost the Board
\$167.50 gold and it cost me personally \$120.00
silver an amount which I paid from my own
pocket in order to get rid of this wine shop
which was reeking with filth and in order to
protect our property. On the other hand
I claim for the present members of the station the
credit for the inauguration of an economical
management & use of the Board's funds. ^{1st} For the

is due the practice of building stone
instead of mud walls - a practice which
if adopted 3 years ago would have saved the
Board hundreds of dollars - for then stone was
cheap but even at the present high price
stone walls are on the long run economical.

^{2nd}To them is due the adoption of the follow-
ing by-law viz - "All house repairs
involving an expense of more than \$5.00
shall be undertaken only after consultation
with the local members of the Mission Building
Com. and all involving an expense of more
than \$20.00 only after the approval of the
Station has been obtained" - a rule
which is designed to secure a more econom-
ical use of repair funds - a point
in which I do from the first thought the station
prone to an injudicious use of Mission funds.

This was adopted last spring & does not bear
upon last year's repairs.

^{3rd}It is to them is due the practice of
having station oversight of the way in which
all funds are used which has led to a
more careful use of funds and has led us
to question some of the precedents established
by the founder of the Mission: One of these
precedents has just been referred to the Board

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For an opinion - viz - whether or no the Board
respect to furnish us with books for language study.
The decided policy of the Land Station has
been toward economy - so much so as to
cause some complaints within the mission, such
as take a man nearly two years to get an
insight into a knowledge of a language to warrant
him in reversing the precedent established on
a field and it is not strange that we
followed the customs & rules we found here
until such time as we had knowledge suf-
ficient to enable us to introduce what we
think are better plans. Time and again
have I regretted many of the precedents estab-
lished here not the least of which is the
one which started the missionaries ~~with~~ with
the appearance of men of wealth ranking with
the nobility - who should conform to all the
customs followed in the foreign diplomatic
circles. I am totally out of sympathy
with the desire to maintain the same social
life which exist in the non-missionary
community. There are certain ways of using money
and ways of living with which I have no sympathy
but every man answers to his own
Master as to how he uses his own money
and if a man has money of his own doing

side of what he receives from the Board
he is very liable to be subject to criticism
upon the part of those who know nothing
at all of his private affairs.

When it comes to the use of the Mission Funds
it is an entirely different question and no
man can follow his own ideas. That is
a Mission affair and I assure you that
we have been making a steady advance
towards a more economical use of them.

I do not think we have reached perfection yet
in our management of funds - but, it was no

easy task which was given us when we were
left to run the Mission's affairs with but little
experience & an inadequate knowledge of the language
& customs of the people. Now the Board at least has

striven ^{these few years} and is striving to use funds more & more
economically. I am ready to affirm most earnestly that

I do not think any thing we do will prevent
some people from criticizing us. Was there ever

a time when people did not discharge not only
Missionary work but all Christian work? People

will criticize us whatever we do. If we play tennis
we are frivolous & worldly minded. If we do not play

tennis we are hermits and neglect our health.
If a man has money of his own or funds from

whom he obtains that which enables him to have
 a well home - he is extravagant and he lives
 in his use of funds. If criticisms come from
 true Christians in earnest sympathy with our work
 and who know the facts we ought to be more than glad to hear and profit
 by them - but if from those who are not Christians or
 not in sympathy with the real spiritual character of our
 work - we can spend half our time in answering such
 and not satisfy them.

The second point I wish to touch upon is that
 concerning the expectation of great spiritual results.

Your letter was the first news that I had of such
 a message having been sent to you through Rev. Mr.
 Sampson, who called here while I was in Europe.

I cannot understand how such a message as your
 letter indicates that you received could possibly have
 been sent by any one who believes the word of
 God and I think there must certainly have
 been a mis-understanding somewhere.

I quote your letter - "we must not expect great
 spiritual results in Iowa." Why not? are we not
 already getting great spiritual results? certainly I
 have been more than encouraged with the bright
 prospects of our work. What are spiritual results?

Statistics alone do not measure results - I bap-
 tized but 2 men in the north this summer but that
 does not represent the results. I could have

baptized 50 or more persons and give an ap-
 pearance of great success and large results now
 but time will vindicate the wisdom of a policy which
 tends to lay good foundations for permanent work.
 Mr. Gifford reports a large number of applicants for
 baptism in the South. Few men there have been
 baptized but they do not represent the results.
 Last year we baptized 21 people - this year
 we have so far baptized but 7 tho' a number
 more will be baptized this fall as we have
 several classes who have been under instruction for
 a year or more. The condition of the native
 Church is, to my mind, better than ever tho'
 there are many backsliders and indifferent ones
 among those enrolled. There has not been any time
 in the history of this native Church when such was not
 the case. When I came here both sides had just
 been disciplined - one excommunicated - the number
 of Christians reported was 90 or more - a large proportion
 of whom have not been seen for three years at least
 and some who have never been seen since they were
 baptized. But ~~a very few~~ ^{many} have here attended Church
 since I have been here. The condition today
 is no worse - I think better than it then was, for
 we have set ourselves to the faithful instruction
 of the Church that we might send forth real
 Christians to teach the gospel which they believe.

I rejoice in the evidence of growth in fact on the part of many of our members and look upon that as the greatest of spiritual results. We have not made the progress which would have been made had Dr. Heron and Mr. Underwood not been removed from the field - but with our limited knowledge of the language we have done what we could and we have been blessed.

Are we satisfied? By no means - and now that we are prepared for better work and have some knowledge of the language we have been entering upon more and more aggressive work as we have found ourselves capable of doing so. A few years of faithful work on our part will under the blessing of God vindicate the ^{wisdom of the} policy of building well the foundations even tho' a corner policy would present a greater appearance of success.

What I imagine was the purport of the message sent thro' Mr. Sampson, etc. - that such results are not to be expected as one would infer from the reports circulated by Mr. Ross concerning the work in the North and the rumors which have gained credence at home that Korea is on the point of becoming a Christian nation and that the Koreans are clamoring for the gospel. Such reports were circulated concerning Japan when I was in the seminary 5 years ago.

The world knows now that such is not the case. Of North Korea presents any such conditions as has been represented - if the Koreans are clamoring for the Gospel as such - I shall praise the Lord for it - but I cannot write you any such reports and tell you what I believe to be the truth. I will not put my youth and inexperience and knowledge of the work in the North against the years & experience and knowledge of Mr. Rose (altho' I can personally have once seen more of that work than he has) and say that he has misrepresented things - but I do say that I have been utterly unable to find what she represents to be there. I have met some of those thousands who are ready to become Christians and their idea is that by becoming Christians (my disciples) they are to be fed and clothed ^{by us} all their lives and spend their time in eagerly studying the Bible.

The Korean is ready to listen to us as we preach the Gospel and as sure as the promises of God are true so surely do we look for "Gospel's spiritual results" in Korea as I am sure do all your missionaries. We gain nothing

by going glowing (if inaccurate reports of our work) and if accurate true reports of our work do not show fidelity to our work (I do not say

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albeit success) then a mistake was made
when we were sent to the field.

I am glad that you wrote the letter
you did and am sure it will do us
good. The information I had and the
appearance of things justified it - tho I do
not think the facts had they been known
would have altogether done so.

Certainly I do not think the facts are a justifica-
tion of your despondent feelings over the prospects
in Korea and I shall be more than glad if
my letter shall help to remove it. There are

points in which I should criticize ourselves
as severely as you have done and I am sure
that we have as great a feeling of dissatisfac-
tion over our failures & mistakes as you can
share. I do not think we are as faithful
or as consecrated as we should be and I
do feel that we need more & more to be filled
with the Spirit. That your letter may lead us
to a searching of our hearts - to more loyalty
& greater fidelity is my most earnest wish
and prayer.

I should like to write you some things
connected with our medical work. The Soc-
ietal is as my ideas on those questions dif-
fer somewhat from some others in the Mission

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but I have already taken considerable of
my time from other important work and have
written you a pretty lengthy letter.
With kindest regards

Yours sincerely
Yours

Samuel A. Moffett

We are greatly pleased with our new men
including the Southern Board men who have ar-
rived & who will be used in had with us
in building up our Presbyterian Church.

Messrs. Moore & Lee are settling down to earnest
faithful work on the language. Lee has
been with me - is a fine fellow. Consecrated
and true. He is off now to Cienfuegos for
a month - his first country trip. We expect
Sivaller & Miller on next boat. This strong
gives every promise of proving a treasure to
our child's school & women's work.

The prospects are more than bright.